The Kingdom of God in Power.

A

SERMON

Preached before the

RIGHT HONOURABLE

Sir *JOHN SHORTER*, Knight,

Lord Mayor

OF THE

CITY of *LONDON*;

AT

GROCERS-HALL,

November the 20*th*, 1687.

By *Daniel Williams* Minister of the Gospel.

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UMI

To the Right Honourable

Sir *JOHN SHORTER*, Knight,

Lord Mayor

OF THE

CITY of *LONDON*.

My LORD,

WHen your Lordſhip deſired me to Preach before you, the improvement of it to the greateſt uſefulneſs was my concern. To this end it was needful to fix on Subjects ſuitable to an Auditory ſo promiſcuous; none occurred to me ſo conducive to my purpoſe as this, which led me to deal with all men in things moſt important to their Eternal Condition; and yet to mind your Lordſhip and Brethren of ſomewhat referring to your preſent Office.

The ſecond Subject I Preached on, was purſuant to this, viz. The Dedication of our Lives to Chriſt and his Intereſts, from *Phil.* 1. 21.

After I had Preached the Second time, I was ſurpriſed with a Requeſt of your Lordſhips and ſome of the Aldermen to Publiſh both theſe Diſcourſes; but there wanted not many Reaſons, which prevented any deſign of Compliance with that deſire, tho enforced by your undeſerved reſpects to one ſo much a Stranger.

But finding ſome few days paſt, that after all my care to obviate any ſuch ſurmiſes; ſome paſſages in that Second Sermon are miſrepreſented, as irritating of the Church of England:

land: *I am inclined to Publish very soon that Second Discourse, if I may prevent or remove any such offences, which are now at least more fatal than any Imprudent Propagators thereof do apprehend.*

Being thus disposed to publish the last, I am obedient to your Lordships repeated intreaties in sending out the First Sermon in its order.

Tho two days being all the time I had to prepare either of these Discourses, and absence from my Library limiting me to the use of no Book besides the Bible, are my just Apology for some defects in them; yet I must say, that I have delivered nothing but what I believe to be the Will of God; and had my helps or abilities been more considerable, I would not debase matters of so great concernment, by vain Sallies of Wit; nor deaden their common use by laborious Periods, or a lighter Stile. The Institutions of God have their proper decency, and are best managed by a tendency to Spiritual Ends, and general Edification.

The substance of the Account of the nature of the Kingdom of God, I give in Scripture-words, tho chiefly for greater Conviction; yet also that none may arraign it as Cant, *without ridiculing the Divine Oracles, which surely must command dread in all who esteem themselves by a Christian Name.*

I believe, Your Lordship in calling us Nonconformists *to preach before you, and we in undertaking that Labour, can have no Turn to serve, besides the enlargement of Christ's Kingdom; and the revival of the Power of Godliness, so much degenerated into Formality among all Parties. We value Capacious Places no otherwise, than as an opportunity for this: and now we enjoy such, we desire no attempts for more Splendid ones, to the offence of any.*

Perhaps Your Lordship may share in our wonder at the silly Descants of some on our Persons and Performances in this Liberty: We must needs be Tradesmen, because we have preached so long without Publick Sallary. Our Sermons

are

are Cant, *because we use Scripture-Expressions, though in their proper sense: They are* Enthusiastick, *if we say any thing of Heart-work, or the Spirit's influence; We do nothing but* whine, *and* make faces, *if we appear in the least moved by what we say and believe, or seem concerned to prevail with our Hearers. We do ill to preach now, we do not suffer by it: though they know we thought it our Duty, when we paid so dear for it. Or at best, that Contingent Events should supersede our Labours, as a prudential Act: when we are under a solemn dedication to the Work of Christ, as Ministers; and our Labours to bring the Souls of men under the power of Truth, will prove the best security to the Professors of it; when great Offers, and awakening Fears will trample on the cleareſt Notions of an Unregenerate Heart. But I enlarge too far.*

Your Lordship's acting the part of a Christian Magistrate, is recompence for whatever Censures you undergo: the World is not yet of the temper, to speak well of all that do well: and Christ exempts not the Usefullest from hardships, on this lower stage. Peace of Conscience in having performed our Duty, and the Testimony of Christ to our Faithfulness in the Great Judgment, is all the Comfort a Christian can now be sure of, and what he ought to be contented with.

There are many Prayers sent to the Throne of Grace for Your Lordship; That you may want neither Wisdom nor Steddiness in a Place so Eminent, and Circumstances so perplexing. That Promise (which hath somewhat of a Rule in it) is applicable to you, The Integrity of the Upright shall guide them. Prov. 11. 3.

That you may find this accomplished to Publick Conviction, and a Comfortable Event of your Present Employ, is the unfeigned Desire of

Your Lordship's
most humble Servant,
Daniel Williams.

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THE

Lord Mayor, &c.

1 COR. IV. 20.

For the Kingdom of God is not in Word, but in Power.

THE Apoſtle in the latter part of this Chapter, doth more than hint at ſome Attempts againſt the credit of his Perſon and Miniſtry; the Men he points at as guilty of this deſign, did not only wear a Chriſtian Name, but pretended to a more than common Zeal and Light, while they imputed to the Apoſtle ſome contemptible plainneſs and remiſneſs.

He not only vindicates himſelf, but threatneth an Enquiry into theſe plauſible pretences of theirs; reſolving on that Enquiry, to determine, whether that extraordinary Profeſſion was expreſſive of the power of Godlineſs, or only a dead Image; and whether the improved Doctrines they boaſted of, were the great eſſential Truths of the Goſpel, and thoſe delivered in a manner conducive

to the advancement of Gods Kingdom. This is the ſenſe of *v.* 19.

My Text is a Reaſon of that deſigned Enquiry; and the force of it, as a Reaſon, lay in theſe Implications.

All this noiſe may be without any Subſtance; the Power of Religion lies in ſomewhat above theſe pretences; the Kingdom of God, which is the only valuable Concern, conſiſts not in Externals, but in the Power of Religion: and it's moſt ſuſpicious, that theſe cenſorious Pretenders (who obſtruct my Miniſtry) are little ſharers in, or Friends to the Kingdom of God, after all this *fair ſhew in the Fleſh.*

On theſe accounts, the Apoſtle's ſearch in order to a Judgment of theſe mens Profeſſion and Doctrines, was juſtifiable and neceſſary. And his Practice, with the Reaſon of it, calls all Chriſtians, tho not to buſy or uncharitable Surmiſes; yet to a prudent Examination of Men, that deal with them in the concernments of their Souls. And more eſpecially, if they challenge the Graces and Truths we have received, and pretend to outdo and blaſt the Labours of ſuch we have profited by, as if none but they could be Inſtruments of conferring Grace, or inveſting us in the priviledges of the Church.

This Examination is frequently enjoined, 1 *John* 4. 1. 1 *Theſ.* 5. 21. God hath given us a Rule to judg of Men and Doctrines by; and ſome degree of Abilities to judg of them by that Rule.

It is true, *Paul* as an inſpired Perſon, had an extraordinary Spirit of diſcerning, which ordinary Chriſtians cannot pretend to. Nevertheleſs, God hath appointed private Chriſtians to try all Doctrines by the Scriptures, *Acts* 17. 11. and directed our Judgment of men by their *Fruits*, *Matt.* 7. 16, 20. As men, we are not utterly incapable to compare and judg of theſe; as Believers, there is an additional fitneſs for it by the Life, and anointing

anointing they have received. This ſpiritual Life is not ſo void of Senſation, but that *the Ears can try Words*; and God's promiſe is a ſecurity, that the Anointing ſhall prevent their finally erring in fundamental Truths, 1 *John* 2. 27. Job 12. 11.

Theſe things muſt excuſe any Chriſtian from blindly giving up his Faith, or Hope, to ſuch who can moſt daringly pretend to Dominion over them. He ought to plead a Judgment of Diſcretion as his right, in what concerns his own Faith and Practice. And tho ſome (whoſe deſigns be thereby juſtly ſuſpected) decry this private Judgment; let not us be diſcouraged from the uſe of it. For it is a more publick Judgment, if true, than the miſtaken Senſe of a whole Council. It's what diſtinguiſheth us from Bruits, in our deliberate Acts. Yea, they that condemn it, are forced to uſe this private Judgement in the choice of their Church and Guides.

But I ſhall wave any further regard to the Connexion of the Text, with the reſt of the Chapter, and improve it as a Rule, to judg our own State by, under this plain Poſition,

Doct. *The Kingdom of God is not in Word, but in Power.*

With what concern ought we to attend to a Truth, which is deſigned to diſcriminate the very Profeſſors of Chriſtianity? And which implies, that many ſuch Profeſſors are deceived in their chief concernments in Religion; as being content without that Power, wherein the Kingdom of God conſiſteth? Yet what is more uſual with fallen Man, than to debaſe Religion to what his own Luſts and Fancy will preſcribe? He is ſcarce perſwadeable, that God will exact more from him, than a carnal, idle ſpirit is diſpoſed to allow. We are content,

that ſome external Homage be paid to the Almighty; and that ſome ſleight attempts and attainments be intended; but we confine our religious endeavours within thoſe limits; not regarding that real godlineſs conſiſts chiefly in ſuch diſpoſitions and acts, as expreſs the ſupreme intereſt of God in the Soul; and the effectual energy of his Grace and Power in a renewed mind.

The Text tends to awaken deep convictions in you, That God hath not admitted vain man into the Conſult about the Nature or Standard of his Kingdom; nor will he model the Statutes of it according to a Sinner's Judgment and Hopes; but whether they will be his Subjects, or continue their Rebellion, his Kingdom truly is, and will ſhortly appear to be, *not in Word but in Power.*

I ſhall give you, 1. Some account of what is intended by the Kingdom of God.

2. I ſhall under the ſame Heads explain, how it is *not in Word but in Power*: and evidence the truth of the Doctrine.

I begin with ſome account of the Kingdom of God. This hath various acceptations in Scripture, and denotes ſeveral things, more than is deſigned by this Kingdom in my Text: as

1. Gods Providential Government over all things.

Pſal. 103. 19. *This is that Kingdom which ruleth over all.* He hath not ſo left the Creatures to their own Conduct, but that he ſecureth his bleſſed ends by his management of them. This is that Dominion, to be ſubject to which, no mans conſent is asked: to which all are obedient againſt their repugnant inclinations, and deepeſt contrivance. Sinners in their utmoſt neglects of the revealed will of God, yea in their moſt notorious violations of them, are ſubject to this Providence, and ſerve its purpoſes. *Surely the*

Pſal. 76. 10. *wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee, and the remainder thereof thou*

thou ſhalt reſtrain. By this Kingdom's influence it is, that bleſſed Effects do oft proceed from diſmal Cauſes; and what ſeems very deſtructive, doth contribute to the beſt event. We may well ſay of this Kingdom, it is *in Power*; it being the irreſiſtible execution of what the Divine Will hath decreed; yea is the effective will of the Supreme Diſpoſer of all things.

2. The glorious State, Rewards and Priviledges of God's Subjects in the higheſt Heavens: That's the Kingdom of glory, and completes the things begun in this Kingdom of Grace. There God ruleth, and is obeyed in a manner incomprehenſible to us. We ſhall be Subjects, and yet *Kings*, *Rev.* 1. 6. We muſt always pay our homage, but in Princely Robes. Bodies and Souls will bear an amazing reſemblance of Chriſt our Head. And tho the Divine Eſſence, whoſe glory all the Mediatoral Contrivances of Chriſt's Kingdom referred to, *will be all in all*, yet we ſhall behold in the Humane Nature of Chriſt, as great manifeſtations of God, as Men or Angels were capable of; the divine glory ſhineth in the face of Chriſt above all other things; and he ſeemeth deſigned to be a Mediator of fruition, for the improvement of the Glory of Angels, as well as the other glorified Subjects of that Kingdom: The Glory of God doth lighten that Heavenly City, and *the Lamb is the light thereof.* By all our preſent improvements we labour for, and haſten to that Kingdom; and therein terminate all the bleſſed methods we are under in this our lower ſtate.

Rev. 1. 6.
Phil. 3. 21.
1 Joh. 32.
1 Cor. 15. 28.
Rev. 21. 23.

But the Kingdom of God which my Text refers to, is the Moral Government of God among men on Earth, eſpecially as he is King Redeemer, in and by the Lord Jeſus.

There be three things belonging to this Kingdom, which are ſeverally called by this ſame term, *the King-*

Kingdom of God, and each of them may well be intended by the Holy Ghoſt in my Text.

I. The Goſpel, which containeth the Laws, Inſtitutions, and Charter of this Kingdom.
II. The Graces and Actings which qualifie men as Subjects of this Kingdom; and expreſs God's Authority over them, and their Loyalty to Him.
III. All true Believers, who are the real Subjects that make up this Kingdom.

I might inſiſt on ſome other things, but theſe will be of greateſt uſe to us, and are principally intended.

I. I. The Kingdom of God is the Goſpel, which containeth the Laws, Inſtitutions, and Charter of our King Redeemer.

Mat. 21. 43. So it's taken, *Mat.* 21. 43. *The Kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you*: that is the Goſpel. But when I uſe the word *Goſpel*, I do not mean the Goſpel, in oppoſition to the *Moſaical* diſpenſation, as it is oft uſed. The Goſpel Adminiſtration in this ſenſe is often called in the Evangeliſts, the *Kingdom of Heaven*, as being a fairer, more full, and powerful Edition of the Inſtitutes of this Kingdom, than was publiſhed before; tho yet the Kingdom commenced, and had its eſſential Laws and Rules long before Chriſt's coming. But I mean the Goſpel as a Law of Grace, in oppoſition to the Law of Works delivered to man in his Innocent State.

To direct your conceptions in this important Truth. You muſt conſider, 1. That God had, and exerciſed a Supreme Authority over men, as he was their Creator. He enacted Laws for our obſervance, well becoming his Nature to injoin and our Condition to obey. For ſome time we continued Loyal in *Adam*, our common Head: but by his fall, Mankind became rebellious againſt God; and

and by the Penal Sanction of the law of Works, and the Rule fixed for man's propagating his Condition with his Nature, we loſt our original power to obey; and forfeited our right to all that Good which was promiſed to perfect obedience; Yea, are expoſed to the utmoſt miſery in that Curſe denounced againſt the leaſt ſin. This is the condition of all men as related to God as our Creator; though he has loſt nothing of his right to command, or puniſh his Rebellious Creatures. Gal. 3. 10.

How juſtly might our injured Lord have confined our ſtate to theſe methods? Who might complain? if God had finally executed *that judgment which paſt on all men unto condemnation.* The irremediable ſtate of Devils on their Rebellion, may awaken Mankind, to aſcribe all new overtures for happineſs to the riches of the Grace of God. Yea, every part of that Curſe which exerts its ſelf by any degree of miſery in Soul or Body, ſhould convince us, that it's of meer mercy we are not bound in chains to the judgment of the great day. Rom. 5. 16, 18.

2. Immediately after the fall, God erected a new Kingdom in and by Chriſt as Redeemer. In the Curſe denounced againſt the Serpent, he opened a door of Grace to ſinful Man. He treats with us in order to our recovery, and reſolved eventually to ſave the Elect: yet this was to be in no other way, but by becoming ſubject to the Rules of this new Kingdom. This Kingdom is owing to Chriſt as the procuring Cauſe; and the management thereof was deputed to him. He managed it in a variety of ſucceſſive adminiſtration; as Lawgiver he enacted Terms of life, Rules of practice, Directions for Worſhip and Diſcipline among his Subjects. He publiſhed bleſſed Promiſes, and denounced Threats againſt the unperſwadeable.

No man was ever ſaved but by the Rules of this New Kingdom, and owes it to the Grace and Merits of

 Chriſt:

Christ: though every dispensation did not give equal notices of Him, or that explicite knowledge of God-man Redeemer; notwithstanding that Sacrifices pointed to Him, and sundry Prophetick Revelations foretold Him.

3. All Mankind are under all the Laws of this Kingdom, as far as they can attain to the knowledg of them.

They are obliged to obey the terms of Life, which are injoined by the Redeemer in their respective Age, and Place. Life is offer'd to them, and they are saveable on those terms. Sinners now act a new Rebellion, as well as bind the first Curse on themselves, when they refuse obedience to the Remedial Law. Yea, they aggravate their ruine by their wilful obstinacy, which is a great part of the undoing-impotency of Mankind. Awful is that complaint of Christ, wherein he leaves the blood of lost man on their own heads; *Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life.* Refusers of Christ add to their Rebellion against the Creator, most notorious disloyalty against the Redeemer, who hath an additional claim to dominion over us. For, *We are bought with a price, and therefore should glorify him with our bodies, and our souls, which are his:* And he had a respect to this new acquired Authority in his death; for, *to this end he died, and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the dead, and of the living.*

John 5. 40.

1 Cor. 6. 10.

Rom. 14. 9.

All of us are further engaged to observe all the Laws of his House, the Rules of Worship and Practice, yea, every Institution of his. There is an amazing Sovereignty in the different promulgation of these to the World: but to give my sense thereof, would exceed the limits of one Discourse.

II. II. The Kingdom of God denotes the graces and actings, which qualify men as Subjects of God's Kingdom; and expres God's Authority over them, and their Loyalty

alty to him. Thus you must understand that Scripture; *The Kingdom of God is not in meat, and drink; but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. q. d.* The dominoin of God over Christians, and their loyal state of obedience to God, lieth not in your poor differences about meat, or such low matters. Therefore judg not others, who may differ from you; nor be you satisfied with your own usages in these less momentous things, as an evidence of your Christian state: God's Kingdom is in far higher matters, even in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. How can any man after so plain a signification of the Divine Will, place all his Religion in trifles; or sacrifice the undoubted Concernments of God's Kingdom, to disputable things of far less moment? Peace alone, by this Text, is more valuable, than all the things for which some have long divided the Church. This is the Kingdom of God as erected in the heart, and is inclusive of whatever denotes sincere subjection to Christ. To this belongs every Grace which is essential to a real Christian, and all those acts which are necessary to express the prevalency of such Graces over all opposite Vices and Defects. Rom. 14. 17.

This Kingdom is advanced to the degrees of mens improvement in the Divine Life, and the Dominion of God over their Designs and Actings.

III. The Kingdom of God is used for all true Believers; who are the real Subjects that make up this Kingdom. These are they, in whom the former Graces abide, and do acknowledg the Authority of the Lord Redeemer. They are *all translated into the Kingdom of Christ.* By their consent to the terms of the Gospel, they who were Aliens, are Naturalized; and the Outlawry is reversed, which stood against them as Rebellious Subjects. This King- III. Col. 1. 13.

dom is of the ſame extent with the Church Myſtical; and as theſe Subjects multiply, it is enlarged.

It's true, that all who credibly profeſs ſubjection to Chriſt, are Parts of this Kingdom, as it's viſible and external: they are Subjects in the judgment of Charity, and as to external Privileges. This Chriſt aſſerts in that Parable; *The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a Net caſt into the Sea, and gather'd of every kind, which when it was full, they drew to ſhore; and gathered the good into Veſſels, but caſt the bad away.* You ſee that Hypocrites and Sincere Believers are of the Kingdom: but Hypocrites belong to it, as they wear the viſage of the Sincere; and therefore the name of Subjects belongs to them only equivocally. Whereas in the moſt proper ſenſe, it is confined to men heartily devoted to Chriſt. He is eminently *King of Saints*; even of ſuch who have unfeignedly ſubſcribed his Covenant, *Pſal.* 50. 5. All ſuch are eſteemed by him for his People, and they, yea only they can ſay concerning God, *The Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will ſave us.*

Mat. 13. 47, 48.

Rev. 15. 3.

Iſa. 33. 22.

I can hardly forbear to bewail the dangerous condition of many men profeſſing Chriſtianity. Crowds will be found Rebels in heart, dead as to a Spiritual Life, whilſt *they have a* name to live: and obeying their Luſts, when they bow the Knee to Jeſus.

Rev. 3. 2.

Having finiſhed this Account of the Kingdom of God; I proceed to explain how it is not *in Word*, but *in Power*. And with the Explication I will inſert the proof of the Doctrine, That the Kingdom of God in the three forementioned Inſtances is not *in Word*, but *in Power*.

Whatever mens Conceits be of this Kingdom, it will be found to conſiſt not in Weak Appearances, but in effectual Realities. It attaineth the ends of the Conſtitution, it is expreſſive of a Divine and Supernatural

pernatural Virtue, and is not a dead Image, and carnal Matter.

1. The Goſpel of Chriſt our Redeemer is effectual by the Spirit, to recover fallen Men, and to govern, and improve them unto eternal Life.

This is not an empty Sound, it conſiſts not in low or weak Matters, but is Life and Power. Every command is enſtamped with the Authority of the Lord of Heaven and Earth, and is not the faint advice of poor Mortals. Men diſobey them at their utmoſt peril, *Hebr.* 12. 25. Life and Death is annexed to them by a Soveraign, who is able, and reſolved to execute his Royal Sanction. They have a Virtue in them to diſpoſe us to Obedience, and are holy, ſpiritual and perfect.

The Matters revealed by the Goſpel are not vain Conceits, but glorious Realities; they are beyond the Light of Nature to conceive; they ſhine in a Light fit to illuminate the darkned minds of Sinners; and when they are apprehended, they muſt inſpire with the higheſt Reſentments, and make laſting Impreſſions on the Soul.

The Promiſes are not doubtful Words, but great and ſure; they contain all that's good, they are founded on the Veracity of God, who cannot lye; and on the Virtue of Chriſts Undertakings and Death, which cannot be diſappointed. Yea, they are mighty, to diſpence the Grace contained therein to needy Souls; and are the effectual Inſtrument to inveſt men in all the bleſſings of the Covenant, when the Condition is performed by them.

The Sacraments, and all Inſtitutions of Chriſt, as to Worſhip or Diſcipline, are powerful to improve our Graces, mortifie our Luſts, maintain our Converſes with

God, and dispence Joy and Comfort, through the Operation of God by them.

The Arguments urged by the Gospel, are fit to move, and have all in them necessary to an Instrument of moral Government.

The Presence of God is promised, and the Efficacy of all these means argue the Spirit's operation by them; they are the Vehicle of the Holy Ghost, and therefore when we are profitable to the Souls of Men, our *Gospel cometh to them not in Word only, but in Power, and in the Holy Ghost.*

1 Thes. 1. 5.

This Gospel is called, The *Arm of God revealed, the Scepter of his Kingdom, and Rod of his Strength.* This affords *those Weapons which are mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, and bringing every thought to the obedience of Christ.* God hath appointed it to raise dead Souls, and subdue rebellious Sinners to his Government. In the Institutions of the Gospel God meets us, and blesseth us; he communicateth Light and Strength, whereby the weak Christian is enabled to persevere.

2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.

What Trophies of its Power are in Heaven and Earth? How many great Sinners hath it changed? Every Age and Place where it cometh, yield a Testimony of its Energy; restraining some, turning others from Idols, to serve the Living God; from a carnal Life, to a spiritual. This hath made the Ambitious and Covetous to Postpone all to the concerns of an invisible World, and sacrifice their former Idols, to the Profession of Truth.

How many weak Christians hath it strengthned to do, and suffer unexpected things? What Joy hath it infused into sadned Hearts? On these accounts, the *Gospel is the Power of God unto Salvation, to every one that believeth.*

Rom. 1. 16.

2. The

2. The Graces and Actings which qualify the Subjects of Christ, are so spiritual, real and sublime, as to argue a Divine life, and the Dominion of God in the Soul.

What this Kingdom requireth and effecteth, are not bare Pretences, weak Attempts, sleight Attainments, or external Performances; these are too mean for God to injoin or accept.

He doth not paint a dead Carkass, but raise it to Life: he createth a new Heart, wherein his Laws are prevalent Dispositions, and communicateth a nature too Divine to derive its birth from a lower Original than Regeneration by the Spirit, *John* 3. 3.

Hence all real Christians are said *to be born of God, and partakers of the divine Nature.* Our crying Lord, Lord, and all external Alterations, signify little in this *new Man, which after God is created in Wisdom, and true Holiness.* I will hint at some particulars which have the chief place in this Kingdom, and you'l see that none of them is in *Word, but in Power.* 1 John 5. 4. 2 Pet. 1. 4. Eph. 4. 24.

Faith is not a faint assent to the Truths of the Gospel, but such a realizing of invisible Objects, reliance on Christ, and consent to Him the Redeemer, as purifieth the Heart, worketh by Love, and derives from Christ fit supports in the way of truth and holiness to eternal Life.

Gospel Repentance is not a bare sorrow for Sin, but a true hatred, and forsaking of Sin on Gospel-motives.

Our love to God is not in a few kind or sleighty thoughts of God, but a prevalent esteem of God, and delight in him, as the supreme Good; and this expressing it self in sincere Obedience to his strictest Laws, and Zeal for his Interests when most despised. *If a man love me,* saith Christ, *he will keep my words:* If we love any thing as him, it's a hating of him by the Rules of this Kingdom. John 14. 23.

The Worship which Christ insisteth on, and disposeth all his Subjects for, *is in Spirit and in Truth*; it's no sleight Joh. 4. 24.

ſleight performance, nor by humane Inventions. Prayer muſt be a fervent pouring out of the Soul to God, and not lip-labour: Hearing the Word is of no eſteem with him, unleſs the heart be obedient to the word, *Jam.* 1. 25.

Pſal. 62. 8. Iſa. 29. 13.

1 Pet. 3. 21. *Baptiſm is not the putting away the filth of the fleſh, but the anſwer of a good Conſcience toward God.* That is, Baptiſm lieth in the Souls true Correſpondence to, and Performance of our Baptiſmal Profeſſion and Vows, and not a meer ſprinkling of water in an external act of the Miniſter.

Receiving the Lords Supper is not the bare partaking of the Conſecrated Elements; but Communion with our Crucified Chriſt, by Faith and Love, under the quicknings of the Spirit, *Joh.* 5. 53, 63. We ſee that God chiefly regardeth the inward Worſhip of the Soul, and not bodily performances.

The ſame power extends to every thing, wherein Religion is concerned: if this Kingdom of Grace obtaineth in the Soul, Gods Authority is ſet above our wills, humours and luſts; Satan is dethroned, Sin hath not Dominion over us, *Rom.* 6. 6, 14. Spiritual things are reliſhed above ſenſitive good: we are brought to live to God, and not to carnal ſelf: and there is an impartial reſpect to all Gods Commandments, *Pſal.* 18. 22.

To finiſh this particular, this Kingdom conſiſts of Holy Inclinations in the Heart, and implies a degree of ſtrength to act thoſe Inclinations. Here are not faint Velleities, and uneffectual Deſires or Complaints; *but a Spirit of Power, of Love, and a ſound Mind*; whereby Temptations are in a good meaſure reſiſted, and Holy Actions performed.

2 Tim. 1. 7.

This is the Model of the Kingdom, this his Goſpel Injoineth, this his Grace Effecteth, and any thing below it would not improve a Sinner to the Holineſs our Redeemer deſigned reconciled Sinners to. God's Kingdom never hath place, where any of theſe Eſſentials are wanting,

wanting, or where there is only ſome dead form of them.

3. Believers who are the Subjects of Gods Kingdom, are not meer Profeſſors of Chriſtianity; but truly Regenerate and Practical Chriſtians.

They are of another ſpirit than what they once were; or the reſt of the World continue yet to be; their extraction is higher, *being born not of the will of the fleſh, or of the will of man, but of the will of God,* John 1. 13. They have far different apprehenſions of Spiritual objects than a carnal mind is capable of; theſe practically know the great things of God in a Spiritual evidence, *being taught by him, as the truth is in Jeſus.* They are a Eph. 5. 4. people made willing *in the day of God's power.* Then a Pſal. 110. 3. mighty Arm ſubdued their obſtinacy without violence; ſilenced their prejudices, and made them obedient by agreeable inclinations to the Law, and powerful convictions of God's Authority and Goodneſs. Their Religion is not in empty ſpeculations. As every truth tends to practice, ſo they feel the power of Truth. The objective *Glory of Chriſt transformeth them into the ſame* 2 Cor. 3. 18. *Glory, in their meaſure.* They walk with God whom the world knows not; they live above what Sinners dote on; to pleaſe and honour God is their governing-aim; To keep a Conſcience void of offence towards God and men, is their exerciſe; and working out their Salvation, is their chief buſineſs; while as Pilgrims here, they are waiting for the expected Inheritance: *Theſe live the life of Chriſt*, are acted by his Spirit which dwells in them by an abiding Relation, and are appointed for his glorious purpoſes.

They are not Hypocritical pretenders, tho cenſured as Cheats by ſuch men whoſe Corruptions repreſent all better pretences as Hypocriſie. How much do the Conceptions, Deſigns, Experiences, Attainments and Actings

Actings of these men, exceed the rest of mankind? There is more Piety in many of their common Actions, than in the Religious Performances of others: these are they
Mat. 2. 9. whom the Apostle describes as a *chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people*, fit and designed *to shew forth the praises of him, who called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.*

Can any of you doubt these expres Characters of all sincere Christians? Of these, and only these Christs Kingdom doth consist. There are such persons in the World, or God hath no Kingdom in it. Such as are wholly otherwise in their Temper and Actings, are Rebels and Aliens in Gods esteem; and declared incapable of Eternal Glory.

Perhaps some of you may Prophanely Scoff at this account, as if it were impossible to be thus Sincere and Spiritual; or it were needless to be thus Pious, Just, Temperate, or Heavenly-minded: but be it known to you, that you will shortly be convinced, your selves ought to be such men; and passionately wish all this could have been truly said of you.

I have designedly given the Character of the Subjects of this Kingdom in Scripture-Expressions, lest any should esteem it a Fancy, which they owe not that regard to, as to judge of themselves by it. But I hope you cannot shut your eye against the Testimony of God; nor put any Gloss on those Scriptures which can prevent your suspecting your own Condition. Must not you think now, how few are Members of this Kingdom? How unlike am I to these Subjects of Christ, when I never found any of these things, nor proposed them to my self as things necessary to be attained by me? What a change must there be in my Heart and Life, before such a wretch can be meet to be partaker of the Inheritance with the
Col. 1. 12. Saints in Light, as every real Christian is?

I

It remaineth that I apply more particularly ſuch things as you have heard of the Nature and Power of this Kingdom.

1. What you have heard of the Goſpel may direct us in our judgment of a Goſpel Miniſtry.

We Miniſters are appointed by Chriſt to perſuade Sinners both to yield ſubjection to God Redeemer, and then to walk in all due Loyalty towards Him; all our Adminiſtrations muſt be managed by thoſe Laws which reſpect our Office, otherwiſe we affront the Lord Jeſus, in whoſe Name we act, and become uſeleſs to Men, for whoſe good we are deſigned.

The matter of our Preaching ought to be the Goſpel, *even the Kingdom of God, and the things which concern our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; the manner ought to be ſuch as moſt conduceth to render it effectual to thoſe Ends for which it is publiſhed. Miniſters are to do their utmoſt, that this Goſpel may come not in Word only, but in Power, and that all may be brought to a compliance with it. Act. 28. 31.

Therefore we ought not to make State Affairs, human Conceits or dictates of Men, the matter of our Preaching; the Rules of the Covenant of Works, nor the Law of Nature as under a reſpect to that Covenant, are not to be urged by us; tho the Law of Nature as a rule of our Actions, is ſtill of force in this Kingdom of God Redeemer, and ſo muſt be inſiſted on. Act. 19. 8.

The great things we ought to perſuade, are the things God hath made the terms of Life to *redeemed* Man. The methods of Reconciliation muſt be intended; for God now dealeth with Men not only as his rational Creatures, but as fallen Sinners, under new Overtures for Life. Sinners muſt be directed by us to Chriſt, as He *on whoſe Shoulders this New* Government is, and in whom there is Grace, Strength and Pardon, which our Apoſtacy made impoſſible by the Law of Works.

The great Doctrins of Regeneration, Repentance, Faith

in Christ, love of God, and sincere Obedience (as explained by the Gospel Standard,) are the things to be urged as conditions of Salvation; should we mistake these Terms of Life, or neglect to perswade your Compliance therewith, other things would be vain, and leave you dead in your sins. What profit is it that you learn and do all things else, if you submit not to the Terms of the Gospel? For this is the lowest Rule of Gods judgment by which the salvation of any sinner is possible. *He will judge the secrets of all men by the Gospel.*

Rom. 2. 16.

The *manner* also of a Ministers preaching of these Truths is considerable. We should publish these in the greatest Evidence, and in a way most probable to be attended with the influence of the Spirit. Much of that divine Power which perswades you, is exerted in fitting the Preacher to plead with you. Ministers of the Gospel are therefore to avoid *the enticeing words of mans wisdom, and must preach in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power.* We must represent things in the greatest plainness; urge Gospel Arguments with the fullest Evidence and Importunity, *approving our selves to every mans Conscience* to the utmost, for their Conviction and Perswasion. It's not invaluable to you that the Minister in all his work is under the power of what he preacheth, and doth all in a humble dependance on the blessing and power of the Holy Ghost.

1 Cor. 2. 4.

This Ministry answers the Gospel description; this hath a tendency and fitness to subdue Souls to Christ; this is that the Lord Jesus (who ordinarily works according to the aptitude of means) doth usually bless. Such a Ministry is a sign that God intends the enlargement of his Kingdom; and according to what appears of it among us, we may expect proportionable Effects. The Lord bring the vain Minds of Hearers to approve this sort of Preaching, and convince us Ministers of all levity and mistakes in our Ministration.

2. What

2. What you have heard of the nature of Grace, and Loyal Actings towards Christ, may sharply reprove all such who seem by Principle to place Religion in any thing short of this Power. It's needful they lock up the Scriptures (those Royal Statutes of Christ) who dare place Christianity in external Rites, tho the Heart and Life be unsanctified. Its Disloyalty to Christ to exchange his Institutions for human Inventions. Yea, it's Disloyalty to exclude internal Worship for external, and define Graces and spiritual Acts by no more than a dead Image of them. How must they debase Religion who commend Pomp for spiritual Devotion, and make carnal Observances serve instead of Gospel Faith and Love? Surely they little regard the Authority and Constitutions of Christ, who account Attrition to be Repentance, and represent Pilgrimages, Confession, Penance, and blind Obedience to the Church, *&c.* too like an Atonement for the absence of the essential Terms of Life. What can more expresly contradict Mens pleasing God by meer external Acts or Profession, than my Text doth? But alas! the Doctrin of *Opus operatum* is too natural to a dead sinner, to be confined within the Walls where first avowed. All are too apt to throw off Duties as a Penance, and think the eternal Spirit is satisfied with bodily Homage. Many judge that Ordinances edify them as a meer Charm, without any due exercise of Soul in them: A mistake in this essential Point, is the reason also why many jear at the Graces of God, promise Life to a just and civil demeanour, and scoff at Holiness as Preciseness. The like Effects of a carnal Spirit is Mens esteeming Regeneration to be no more than external Baptism, when that is but a visible Representation of the nature of it, and a Seal and Instrument of investiture in Gospel Blessings, on supposition that we are inwardly Regenerated. What a gross conceit is it, that Conversion is but a turning from a gross Infidels State by a bare external Profession of Christianity, tho the mind be

Col. 2. 18, 19, 23.

ſtill unrenewed, and the Heart unimpreſſed by a divine Principle? From theſe Sentiments Men ridicule all Pretences to thoſe things which the Scriptures expreſly declare concerning every Believer, as praying in the Spirit, Communion with God, Union to Chriſt, Spiritual Joy, *&c.* tho the things are intelligible by any that are judicious, and experienced by ſuch as have any converſe by Faith with God and ſpiritual Things. It's pity that a prophane Spirit ſhould arraign the Matters peculiar to a Life ſo far above its ſelf; eſpecially when God hath told us, *A natural man cannot know the things of God, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* But whilſt they muſt be *fooliſhneſs* to them, *Wiſdom will be juſtified by its Children*, as better Advocates and fitter Judges.

1 Cor. 2. 14.

Luke 7. 35.

Nevertheleſs the Devil attains a deſtructive End by theſe Notions; for his Dominion is ſupported, and poor ſinners are ſecure in a State of Rebellion againſt Chriſt, whiles they flatter themſelves as Subjects to him, becauſe they do a few trifles which neither Satan nor their Luſts forbid, and Cuſtom, Intereſt, or natural Conſcience perſuade to. How will any Soul among you who ſtands guilty of this Charge dare to look the Bleſſed Redeemer in the Face? What terror will ſurprize you, when you are accuſed by him as diſloyal in your very Principles, and aſſerters of that for Religion whereby Gods Sovereignty over the Heart is excluded, and all real actings of Grace unprovided for? You have reproached that which God lays the greateſt Streſs on, which his Kingdom chiefly conſiſts in, and his Saints moſt value themſelves by.

Before I proceed to the Exhortations I deſign, it's needfull to inſert two *Cautions* that may obviate our abuſe of this Subject.

1 *Caution.* Do not deny this Power of Religion concerning any Perſon or Party without manifeſt Grounds.

Charity binds you to think all are truly Religious that profeſs to be ſo, unleſs their Defects or Works palpably blaſt their Pretences, or their Profeſſion be nullified by a direct contradiction:

diction. As the power of Religion ſhould not be ſacrificed to a Ceremony, ſo leſſer Faults do not warrant us to accuſe men as wanting the power of Godlineſs. Whatever is conſiſtent with the habitual ſubjection of a Soul to Chriſt, cannot juſtifie our excluding that Soul out of Chriſts Kingdom. We may ſay, yea muſt affirm of Men differing from us in many things, *The ſame* Chriſt *is their Lord and ours.* 1 Cor. 1. 2. Peace and Love are eſſentials in Chriſts Kingdom; and ſhall we challenge our own intereſt by being cenſorious; or enviouſly narrow the Dominion of our Bleſſed Redeemer?

2 *Caution.* Deſpiſe not the external Inſtitutions of Chriſt under pretence of this Power; the Power and Spirit of Chriſt concur with his Ordinances, and the life and vigor of our Graces are exerted in thoſe Ordinances, and nouriſhed by them.

That Spirit is a deluſion which puts Men above divine Appointments, and the Guilty are as truly Superſtitious as the greateſt Formaliſt. Whiles we are Subjects of Chriſts Kingdom here below, we muſt attend the Ordinances of the lower State of this Kingdom, and divine Inſtitutions are parts of this Kingdom; which tho it be not in word ſo as to exclude the Power, yet it lies in power as incluſive of Act. 28. 19,20. a Chriſtian Profeſſion and external Ordinances.

The next improvement I ſhall make of the Text, is by way of Exhortation, wherein I ſhall regard the Kingdom of God as the power thereof lies in Graces, and acts expreſſive of a divine Life, and the governing Authority of God in the Soul. This includes the two other particulars; for theſe are the effects of the Power of the Goſpel, theſe anſwer the ſpiritual Rules and Demands of the Goſpel; and becauſe of theſe the Subjects of Chriſts Kingdom are not Hypocrites, but truly regenerate and practical Chriſtians.

1. Be throughly convinced that the Kingdom of God is in theſe Graces and vital Acts, and can conſiſt in nothing lower. I have given you undoubted Proof of this, if you

will believe the Gospel beyond your own Fancy, or Satans suggestions: And whether you will enlarge your judgment to Gods decision or no, the time is near when this great
Rom. 2. 16. King *will judge the secrets of your hearts and lives* by this very Gospel Rule.

It's undoing to most Professors of Christianity, that they fondly persuade themselves the Demands of God are not so high and exact, as truly they be; it's true indeed, he makes not legal Perfection to be the Condition of a Right to Life, but yet he enjoyns a spiritual Life and Faith (extensively taken) in order to our Interest in Christ, and to Salvation
Joh. 3. 36. on his account.

Methinks you can hardly in a serious Frame conceive how any thing below real Grace and vital Acts should serve your turn. Consider the glorious Nature of God; and can meer external Performances be suitable to him, either to injoin
Mal. 1. 14. or accept? Would Christ have died to raise dead Sinners to no more Conformity to God than an unholy Heart, and hypocritical Actings amount to? Are the design of the Gospel, and the attested Influences of the Spirit answer'd by a dead Soul or formal Duty? Judge you whether an ungodly, stupid, graceless Professor of Christianity, can either here or in Eternity serve the purposes, for which God erects this Kingdom among Men? What delight can his holy Nature take in such? What Service or Glory can he and his Christ have by such? Yea, what satisfaction can such Men have in God or Heaven? These and the like Considerations may well awaken you to juster apprehensions of this matter, and convince you that the Kingdom of God must lie in this *Power*. And if it be needful to add more, consider wherein can the Kingdom of Satan and Dominion of Sin consist, but in the want of these gracious Qualities, neglect of those Acts, and the prevalency of what is opposite to them?

Set

Set therefore this Standard before the Eye of thy Soul, as that which thou muſt examine thy ſelf by, and be conformable to, if thou deſireſt to belong to this Kingdom of the Redeemer.

Labor induſtriouſly for, and reſt not contented till you have attained this Power of Religion. *Exhort.* 2.

I do in the Name of your Redeemer preſs you to get the Graces, and perform thoſe Acts which argue a ſpiritual Life, and the reſtauration of Gods Image and Authority in your Souls. Be Chriſtians in Truth as well as in Name; let no external Performance or Profeſſion content you; ſee that your Wills be ſubjected to God, that your Lives be regulated by his Laws, and all your religious Acts inſpired with a divine Power. This is the principal matter we are to treat of with you, and what you are chiefly concerned to attend to. To accompliſh this, it is, that you are entruſted with the Means of Grace, and yet ſpared after ſo long provoking Obſtinacy, which is more aggravated by your treacherous Pretenſions.

That I may enforce this Exhortation, I ſhall deſire you to apply to your ſelves theſe few Motives.

You pretend and engage to no leſs than this Power of Religion by your Chriſtianity. *Mot.* 1.

What you deſpiſe in others and neglect in your ſelves, even this you pretend to, and have ſolemnly Promiſed. Do not you profeſs to be the Subjects of Chriſt? Have not you renounced the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil, and Covenanted to fight under Chriſts Banner? And ought you not to be and do all this truly? Renounce all theſe Rivals with Chriſt, and he muſt then Reign in Power. Can you think that the Covenant you have ſealed ſo oft at the Lords Table, engageth you to no more than external Profeſſion? When you ſtipulated with Father, Son and Spirit, was no more intended than that you would pay them a ſlight bodily Worſhip? Sure you profeſs as much ſincere Subjection as

as the ſtricteſt, in profeſſing your ſelves Chriſtians; and are not you Hypocrites then, whiles your Souls are unregenerate, and your Lives not governed by the Laws of Chriſt? Oh! tremble to think *that you profeſs to know, and yet in works deny him.* Your Hearts breath Rebellion againſt God, whiles you ſeem Loyal to him. What agreeableneſs to thy Name do a covetous, intemperate, carnal, irreligious Spirit and Life bear? Renounce the Name, or elſe be and do what that Name is deſigned for.

Tit. 1. 16.

How ſad will the thoughts of thy State be, when thou findeſt thy ſelf branded by the Heart-ſearching God, as one *that hath a Form of Godlineſs, but denying the Power thereof.* The word we render Form, is μόρφωσιν, *q. d.* they have the viſage or appearance of true Piety; thou wilt be found a Virgin without Oyl, at the Feaſt without a Wedding Garment; the Son that ſaid to his Father, I will work in the Vineyard, but faileſt to do ſo. Surely, what induceth thee to profeſs to be a devout Chriſtian, ſhould encline thee to be ſo.

2 Tim. 3. 5.

2. Any thing ſhort of this Power of Religion will avail you nothing, but greatly damage you.

You are Enemies in Gods account whatever you perform, and he will treat you as ſuch when the time of Retribution cometh. How wilt thou, Oh rebellious Chriſtian, endure that Sentence? *Bring theſe my enemies that would not that I ſhould Reign over them, and ſlay them before me.* What a loſs wilt thou ſuſtain when thy Gold becomes Droſs, when thy Knowledge, Duties, yea, all thy Religion is vain? Oh that ſo much ſhould be attained in vain, and done to no purpoſe! You will find that if your Graces be not ſincere, they will not ſave; yea, and if they partake not of this Power, they are but guilded Vices. Your feigned Faith is but Unbelief; your pretended Love is Enmity, your partial Obedience is Rebellion; and will God reward, nay, muſt not God ſeverely puniſh unbelieving, irrecon-

Luke 19. 17.

irreconcileable, rebellious Professors of Christianity, and give you a Portion with the most prophane? Nay, your Guilt is aggravated, and your Woes will be the greater. What profit will you reap by Orthodox Principles, while you are Hypocrites in Heart? Church-Membership will expose to the sorest rebukes; for if *the Children of the Kingdom perish, they are cast into outer darkness.* Mat. 11. 23. Mat. 8. 12.

At last pity your selves. Why should you be at any pains, if you will not do enough to bring you to Heaven? Can any thing this side *Glory* be the Reward you intend by being Religious? Why then will you not be so Religious as to obtain that Glory? Oh! mock God no longer, delude thy own Soul no more; thou art almost a Christian, be altogether so; or the Convictions, and Helps that have almost persuaded thee, will aggravate thy ruin when thou fallest into Hell, from a pitch so much higher than the *Atheist* and *Pagan.*

3. Very plausible Appearances of Religion may be without this Power.

Men may appear sincere to others, yea, to themselves, and yet be Hypocrites. There is a very probable Form, without the Power of Godliness. Every living Grace hath its dead Image; thy Heart may be hard when Groans abound; thou may'st cry loud and oft to God, and thy Soul never pray; thy Affections may be on Earth, when thy Eyes are lifted up to Heaven. So inward is the Life of Grace, and so deceitful are our Hearts, that we can say of the seemingly greatest Christians, but as *Peter* did of *Silvanus*; *a faithful Brother, as I suppose.* (For the Supposition may regard that, as well as the uncertainty of his being *Peters* Messenger): Yea, we are so subject to deceive our selves, that we have need to pray with *David, Lord search me, and try me.* 1 Pet. 5. 12.

Alas! How many with *Alexander* may have great Zeal, and want Integrity? Promise much, and perform the contrary. You will be found Virgins with Lamps, and yet Jer. 42. 5. 20.

want Oyl; ſeem lively Saints, and be dead Sinners. We may with bleeding Hearts conſider, that very many have been not far from Grace, and yet never attained it, becauſe ſome one Luſt oppoſed it, or ſome one Idol prevented it. It's a great thing to be truly Religious. The beſt natural Temper, the moſt ſplendid Acts, the exacteſt Profeſſion, are not infallible Evidences of a Mans being truly Pious; but are ſeparable from ſaving Grace.

You have need therefore of the ſtricteſt care and jealouſie in dealing with your Hearts. Oh! look to it, that your Religion hath in it the undoubted Characters of a ſpiritual Life; and of Gods Kingdom being ſet up in you, in its very Power. The hardeſt task is to arrive at this Power of Godlineſs; to get Carnal-ſelf dethroned, and the Go-
Act. 20. 25. vernment of Chriſt chearfully ſubmitted to. This Kingdom in its Duties and Priviledges hath been long preached to you; now God is importunate that you exclude not your ſelves from the Rewards of it, by Rebelling againſt the Laws and Terms of it. Were you acquainted with the Nature of Chriſts Kingdom, it would ſoon be deſirable. The King is our rightful Lord, and not an Uſurper; He hath the tenderneſs of a Father, is infinitely Wiſe and Good: He admits all his Subjects to the State of Children, yea, the Dignity of Kings. All the Laws of it refer to our Good, and tend to our Perfection; and whatever is required of us, he is preſent to aſſiſt us in; yea, ready to forgive all Weakneſſes conſiſtent with ſincere Endeavors: And can you refuſe this eaſie Yoak of Chriſt from day to day? Will you refuſe this, that you may continue Slaves to the Devils, and Servants to your Luſts? Oh! that even now you were made willing, and able to ſubmit to Chriſt; and inſpired with that Divine Nature which agrees to this State, that is, even the heavenly Kingdom begun. Oh! periſh not in your Miſconceits, and wilful Diſobedience after all theſe Pleadings.

3. Improve

3. Improve in the Power of Religion, if you have attained to any degree of it.

There are remains of Weakneſs and Diſloyalty in the beſt of us, and ſo there's place for our utmoſt Endeavors to become more ſuited to this happy State in our Temper and Behaviour. How much are we ſhort of our Fellow Subjects in Light, Strength and Love? *We are come to mount* Zion, *the City of the living God, to an innumerable Company of Angels to the Church of the Firſt Born, and the Souls of juſt Men made perfect.* We ſerve the ſame Lord, we partake of the ſame Nature, are admitted to the ſame Relation, and we expect the ſame Glory which our King doth deſign us to as well as them: And muſt not theſe things cauſe a Bluſh in us, that we are ſo remiſs in our Improvements? Can they fail to awaken our Souls to proceed *from ſtrength to ſtrength?* Therefore, let Mortification be your work while any Luſts remain. Be more Spiritual in every Duty, more Renewed in your Minds; and let all your Works be more perfect. What ſhould be ſo much your concern, as that the Laws of Chriſt have a more abſolute Authority in you, that Gods Image impreſs the whole Man, and your Souls be more enlarged and liſted up in all the ways of this Kingdom? Reſt not till you find Chriſt Rules alone, and that you entirely live to Chriſt under the very conſtraints of Love to Him. How happy will you be, when the very Peace of God rules in your Hearts, yea, ſo rule as that it reſtrains all that may interrupt it, and command to all that can expreſs and maintain it? When this is your Frame, your Delights will be more refined; you will now live much nigher to God, your *exceeding Joy*, and have an *abundant Entrance* to his Palace above, when a few Days are over. Reſolve then that you will ſtill grow up into Chriſt, till nothing inſpires you but his Life, and nothing be done by you but what is Loyalty to Him.

Heb. 12. 22, 23.

Pſal. 84. 7.

Pſal. 43. 4.

2 Pet. 1. 11.

4. Visibly express the sincerity of your Subjection to God, and the Efficacy of his Grace in your Souls. This is incumbent on all Christians; but I shall apply my self more especially to you that are Magistrates, and the occasion of this Assembly. You do profess your selves real Subjects to Christ; evidence then, that real Christians are more fitted to serve their Generation than other Men. Let Christ Govern by all your Power, and his Interests be advanced by you to the utmost of your Talents. Convince the World, that nothing can allure or affright you from exact Obedience to Christs Laws, and Fidelity to his Concerns. Christs Eye is on your Hearts, and Behaviour, in your present Circumstances. The Eyes of many of very different sorts are on you; yea, the credit of Religion is concerned in your Behaviour. And it's but a few Days, when you must with awakened Spirits review your present Actings; it may be under afflictive Dispensations, when thrust off your present Stage: But certainly, when you come to die, and appear before the Tribunal of the Lord your Judge. Therefore create not bitter Reflections by selfish Aims, sinful Neglects, or unbecoming Deviations. A tormenting Conscience in that Day, will not be countervailed by any present Advantage. You are employed in a time that may evidence the utmost which a Christian can do or endure. But whatever may be your Exercise, let it be seen, that you serve Christ with the same honourable Thoughts of him, and Devotedness to him, as ever. You have the same Lord, whose Laws Authority and Interests do not vary with the uncertain Motions of this lower World; and whose Concerns are of an infinitly higher Nature than the poor and perishing Toyls of Mortals.

That I may improve and enforce this Exhortation, Consider.

1. As Christians, and as Magistrates, you are the Subjects of Christ, and so owe the utmost Fidelity and Serviceableness

ableneſs to him. If you are real Believers, you are of his Kingdom; and that admits none that will not ſerve Him without Limitations. Duty and Gratitude binds you to act with a Supream regard to Chriſt; and to all others only in ſubordination to Him. You muſt with *Joſhua*, *follow him fully*. It ill becomes you to conſult with Fleſh and Blood. For did not you Covenant thus with Chriſt; *Lord, do but ſave me, and I ſolemnly ſurrender my ſelf to thee?* What tho his Service may expoſe you to ſome Acts of Self-denial, doth not he deſerve that from you? Shall a dying Chriſt endure ſo much for you, and will you think a little Contempt too much to bear for him? Doth not He in the midſt of his exalted Glory in the Heavens, intercede for you? And can you in a little painted Honor forget to plead his Cauſe? Shall your Mite (which alſo is His) be unimployed for Chriſt, who daily lays out his Power, Wiſdom and Fullneſs, for every Believers uſe?

Joſh. 15. 8. Gal. 1. 16.

As you are Magiſtrates, you are appointed to the Service of this Redeemer. All Power and Judgment is committed to him; Magiſtracy is his Ordinance, and ſhould be executed in Chriſts behalf, as well as the Miniſtry. He is *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, and hath appointed the Rulers of the Earth work in his Kingdom, whether they attend it or no. Magiſtrates have the Sword, as Miniſters have the Word; they have the Coercive Power, we the Perſuaſive; and Chriſt will as truly bring the unfaithful Magiſtrate to an account for his Neglects and Miſtakes, as the unfaithful Miniſter.

2. Your Sovereign Lord will proſper you, according to what he deſigns to effect in your Day, and by your Hands. You ſerve him who manageth all by his Providence; and hath chalked out in his Purpoſe, what ſhall be executed in every Age. *De jure*, the Kingdoms of the Earth are his from the Firſt; but from Age to Age he is advancing Mens acknowledgment of his Dominion, and erecting a holy Go-

vernment in the World, on the Ruins of Satans Kingdom. He hath a Kingdom which all the Powers of Hell ſhall not extirpate the ruder beginnings of, nor prevent its utmoſt growth. This Kingdom lies in the Dominion of Light over Darkneſs, Truth over Error, Holineſs over Sin, pure Goſpel-worſhip over corrupt Worſhip, and the Intereſts of Jeſus over all Rivals. It includes the devotedneſs of earthly Powers to Chriſts Service, and a national Dedication to him as Supream Lord. This Kingdom he enlargeth in ſet times, and towards the latter Days more eminently, upon the deſolations of *Paganiſm* and *Antichriſtianiſm*. This happy time I live expecting, and rejoyce in ſome hopeful, tho awful Prognoſticks of.

Dan. 7. 14.

Iſa. 49. 7. Zech. 14. 9, 16, 19.

Rev. 11. 15.

It pleaſeth Chriſt more eminently to employ his real Subjects as his Inſtruments to advance his Intereſts by; and they ſhall not want an Anointing to fit and ſucceed them, let the Work ſeem never ſo hard, and the Succeſs never ſo improbable.

Dan. 11. 32.

It's not in you or me to allot our ſelves our Day or Work; we muſt take that as our great Diſpoſer hath allotted. This only is incumbent on you, that you fill up your Places, and ſee that Chriſt wants no Service he calls you to, and qualifies you for.

It's not without his Counſel that you are at this Seaſon in the Magiſtracy; this he appointed you to, and hath ſome deſign to ſerve by you: And tho it now appears not what may be the Influence, or Event of this Surprize, leave that to him, whoſe Counſels are a great depth, and doth nothing in vain; yea hath ordinarily ſome great things to do by ſuch, whom he ſignally calls to an opportunity of Service. You ought therefore to do what good your Hand finds to do from day to day, and that with all your might. Reſign up your ſelves to his Conduct, and be faithful in preſent Truſt, within the bounds of your Places. Keep innocent in all your VVays; ſuppreſs all Sin, and advance Righteouſneſs.

VVhiles

Whiles you are thus Exercised, you may expect the Presence of God with you, and have a considerable Influence in whatever work Christ hath now in hand. Others may little esteem any Usefulness of this Kind; but what to a discerning Christian can be more pleasing, than contributing any thing to Christs Interests? What can be more honourable than to be one of them whom Christ designs in that account? *They that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.* Rev. 17. 14.

3. The Kingdom of Glory is reserved, and will be certainly bestowed on all such as are Loyal to Christ in all their present Trust. They that follow the Lord, shall Reign with him. Will you repent present Hardships when you stand about the Throne? Can you grudge him a few days Service, who hope to be ever with him? Will you not in those Rivers of Pleasures, even relent that your Service was no greater? You will wish, Oh that I had exceeded the utmost, which I did best perform! That I had been entrusted with Opportunities for more difficult work! It's no such wonder the damned should have lived to themselves, and guide their Course by secular Interests. But that the *Heirs of Glory* should be afraid, or ashamed of their Fidelity to Christ, would be strange. 2 Tim. 4. 8.

Must not these things reallized by Faith, endue you with new Vigor. Oh! therefore gird up the Loins of your Minds; be prepared to endure Reproach, and any Evil that may attend you. Be fortified against all Allurements; be not of them that are *corrupt with Flatterys*, which sometimes are more ensnaring than Frowns. Whatever others choose, see that in all your perplexing Doubts you be most sollicitous, What now would Christ have me to do? And let your Determinations be fixed, by the Light you gain thro that Enquiry. Examin your Duty as under the Eye of Christ, and Dan. 11. 32.

and reſolve in it as Men perſuaded, that your Happineſs or Miſery depends only on his Favor, or his Frowns; and that he will deal with you according to your Faithfulneſs to him. He will not put you off with vain Hopes, or an imaginary Kingdom; if his Grace rule in you, and you expreſs it in your Station, by a Carriage becoming the Living Subjects of this Kingdom of Grace.

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